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ON THE COVER
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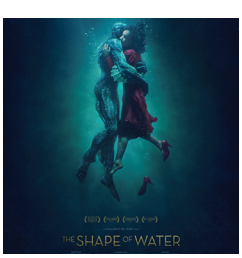

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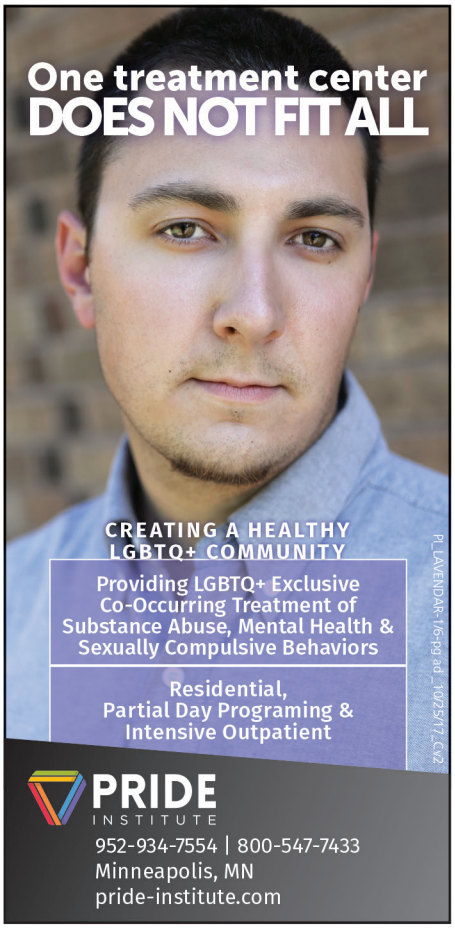
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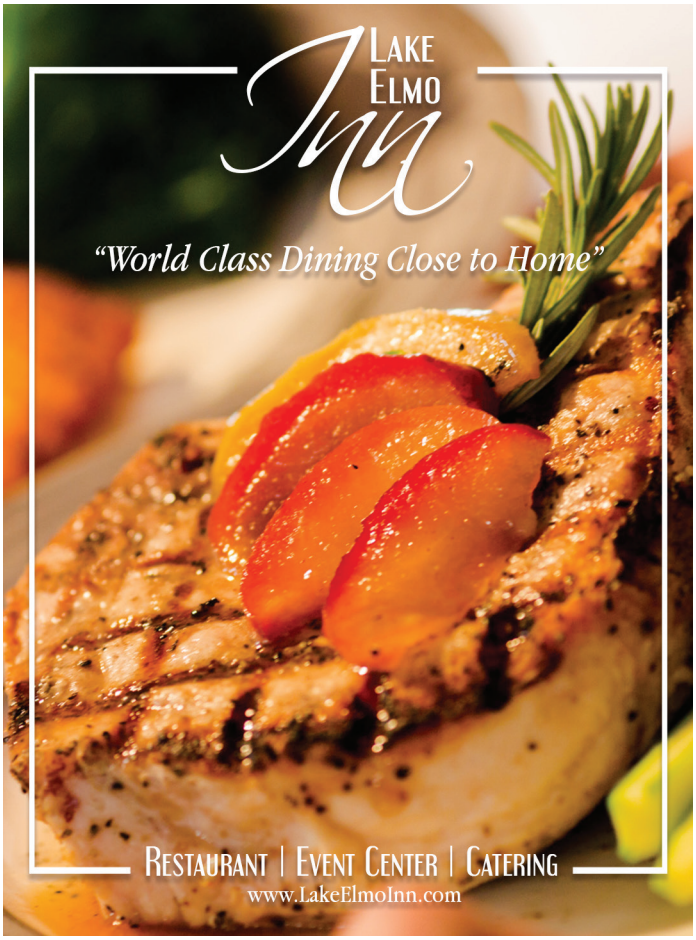
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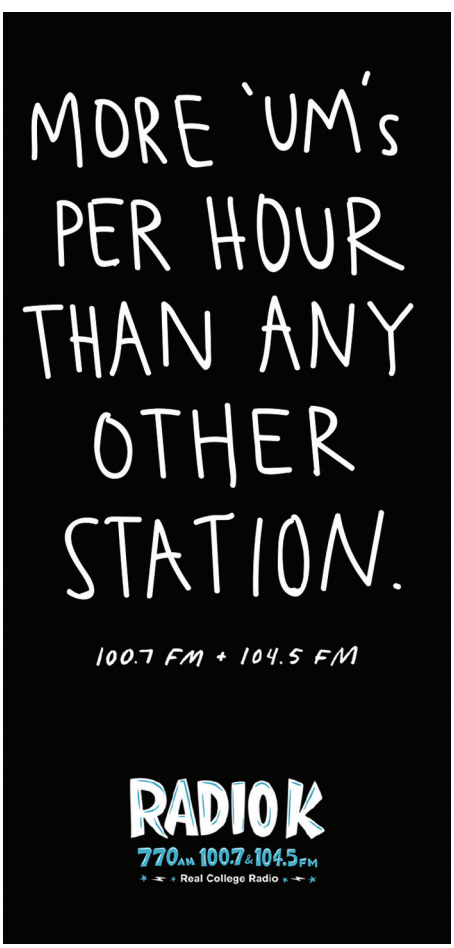
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FROM THE EDITOR | BY CHRIS TARBOX

New Year, New Perspective

Is this thing on?

Oh, good. Hello there! On behalf of everyone at Lavender Media, a very Happy New Year to you and yours! With 2017 in the rearview mirror, it's important to reflect on the opportunities and potential for change every new year brings.

So I find it apropos to formally introduce myself: my name is Chris Tarbox, and I am the new managing editor of Lavender Magazine. As my predecessor Andy Lien pointed out in our Year-End issue, I've been brought on to oversee the print side of Lavender's presence while Andy moves on to focus more on its digital frontier.

A little about me: I was born and raised in the great state of Minnesota, and recently came to Lavender after several years in the newspaper world. With plenty of experience in print media and a genuine love for this community at my disposal, I'm ready to help write the latest chapter in Lavender's illustrious history.

And thus far, it's been a blast! Whether it's getting to know our team and how we operate, to attending my first event as a Lavender representative—a smashing opening performance of Miss Richfield 1981's holiday revue at Illusion Theater— I've been having a swell time getting my feet wet around these parts.

I can't properly put into words how honored and thrilled I am to be part of the Lavender family. I'm excited to work with Andy and the rest of the team putting this amazing publication together, but most importantly, I'm excited to be here for you. I'm excited to continue providing a voice for our community within these pages.

And what a way to kick off 2018! If you're hoping to avoid cabin fever during the winter months, we've got one fine Winter What To Do guide to illustrate the amazing activities and events happening in the Twin Cities and even Greater Minnesota. Winter skating? We got it. A sci-fi drag brunch? All over it. A Valentine's Day 5K? Better dust off those running shoes!

We also look at the wintry wonders of the vast Mesabi Iron Range, and all the fun stuff couples and/or families can enjoy up there, be it snowshoeing, hiking, skiing, or museum visits. And this issue's Senior Living feature illustrates the best strategies for how GLBT seniors can stay fit and active during those cold winter months.

Personally, as someone who needs all the advice he can get on enjoying winter—since, you know, my body can't regulate its temperature to save my life—I can say without hesitation that this Winter What To Do issue can't be missed. I always welcome a chance to have a fresh start, and hopefully with my arrival as your managing editor, that fresh start will come with a fresh and welcome perspective.

So let's get 2018 off to a great start and break out that hot chocolate. But I'll probably hog all of the marshmallows. ■

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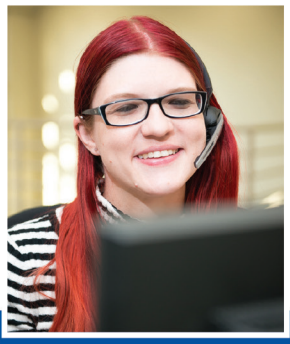
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A WORD IN EDGEWISE | BY E.B. BOATNER

A Winter Getaway When You Can't Get Away

There are those who thrill to ice and chill—exploring ice caves on Lake Superior—and others yearning to immerse themselves in Caribbean warmth.

The getters-away are further divided into those with the means to do so, and those without, whose thoughts are couched in the conditional. The former need no coaching. They've had their tickets since August, or annual time-shares set up; you'll be seeing their banquet and margarita photos on Facebook any day now.

The suggestions here are for those whose finances don't allow flight to anywhere remotely picturesque or out of sight of the U.S. Bank Stadium. But getting away is not necessarily a physical journey, time travel is not attached to airplane tickets, TSA pat-downs, or cancelled flights. The object is not to be "here" for a period of time, and that can be done *in situ*.

Emily Dickinson wrote, "There is no frigate like a book," encouraging, "This Traverse may the poorest take/ Without oppress of Toll." So, to follow my "Stay-at-home Getaway" plan, simply choose enough volumes to fill your allotted vacation days, and the universe is yours. Pull the shades, lock the door, and begin. Here are a few recommendations;

Really long ago, though not so far away: James Kuether's *The Amazing World of Dinosaurs: An Illustrated Journey Through the Mesozoic Era*. You're stricken by heat and the smells of swamp and alien creatures—more than you ever imagined—wondering where you are on the food chain.

Back? Take a cool drink of water and move on to the far away. Read, or reread, Ray Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles*. Stories of getting there, being there, and in the final tale, "The Million Year Picnic," watch the earth self-destroy.

Old *and* new: Emily Wilson's brand new translation of Homer's undying epic, *The Odyssey*. Her iambic pentameter bears you along as swiftly and remorselessly as Odysseus's black ships cut through the wine-dark sea. You'll never hear the sleet against your windows.

More than you can handle in one vacation: There are 75 Georges Simenon Inspector Maigret novels you can plunge into in whatever order you wish, English or French. They're deceptively short, easy reads, but will pull you in.

No matter what you choose, you won't have time to finish everything; or to be bored. Settle in to your La-Z-Boy, pour a favorite beverage, open a book, and bon voyage! ■

LAVENDER LENS
PHOTOS BY SOPHIA HANTZES

SCORE THURSDAYS: UNION BAR & GRILL

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Peter Groynom

A DAY in the Life

By Chris Tarbox

Name: Peter Groynom

Age: I'm 35…years past my seventh birthday.

Where did you grow up? Cleveland Heights, OH.

Where do you live? South Minneapolis.

Who do you live with? My husband, Craig, and our robotic cat, Snowfake.

What is your occupation? I'm a freelance writer and filmmaker. I balance copy writing for start-ups, nonprofits, and ad agencies with my own scripts and film projects.

When did you come out? My early twenties.

How'd that go? Friends and immediate family were great, really supportive. I do have some extended family whom I haven't heard from since I told them I was going to marry a dude, but in general I feel very lucky.

When do you wake up? 8:22 a.m.

Phone alarm or old school alarm? Phone alarm set to a mellow ring tone, barely audible, so it feels like I'm waking up in an airport "Sky Club" lounge.

What's the first thing you do in the morning? Change the wallpaper on my phone. Keeps it fresh.

Breakfast? Yogurt, wheat toast with peanut butter.

Coffee? As soon as possible.

Cream or no? No cream, but two ice cubes (see directly above).

How do you spend your commute: If I'm working from home, I practice my freestyle skills as I move from room to room. If I'm working at a coffee shop, I listen to audiobooks while I walk there, or I brainstorm if I'm biking.

If your job were like a yearbook, what would you be voted? "Most likely to stay on top of his emails." (I pride myself on having zero unread messages across seven different accounts.)

What inspires you? Filmmakers who have a distinct voice and vision: Dee Rees, Lynn Shelton, Denis Villeneuve, Aziz Ansari, so many others. Seeing shows at the Guthrie, the Jungle, and other local theaters.

Do you eat your lunch while working or take a break? I usually eat lunch (usually tacos) while standing over the sink doing dishes and listening to podcasts and prepping a loaf of sourdough to bake later.

Is your work space tidy or a hot mess? My desk is tidy but the rest of our home office is a skyline of stacked books and scrapbooking supplies.

What's been your favorite job? This past fall I was hired to help rewrite the script for a sitcom pilot. Discussing story dynamics and character is my favorite thing to do—it's quite nerdy, but really fun.

Who are your heroes? Elizabeth Warren, Kamala Harris, Bill McKibben, Marilynne Robinson, Tina Fey, Jordan Peele, Dan Bejar, Dan Deacon.

Favorite weeknight meal: Go out, take out, or cook in? I cook at home or hang out with my husband while he cooks. Making a meal or watching someone else make a meal is relaxing to the point of being meditative.

Most embarrassing moment: This isn't the most embarrassing, but one time I was at a party and met someone but forgot her name immediately. I tried that trick where you're like "that's such an interesting name, do you mind spelling it?" She looked at me flatly and said "S – A – R – A." I nodded, shuffled out of the room backwards, and then never spoke to anyone who was at that party ever again.

On a usual weeknight, you are doing what? Yoga, some writing, and then either reading or getting caught up on TV shows.

Bedtime: 11:10 p.m.

Favorite weekend activity: Going out to eat or playing Trivial Pursuit. Staying up too late rewatching 30 Rock.

What are you most proud of and why? In general, I try to encourage others to follow their creative interests. I started a Productivity Club earlier this year with some friends, and all of our projects are coming along nicely.

Words of wisdom to share: If you want to create something, don't hesitate: put in the work and make it happen. Try to partner with passionate, smart people whom you can learn from, who challenge you, and who support you. Always ask yourself if you're wasting other people's time. Be dependable. ■

LAVENDER LENS

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SCORE THURSDAYS: UNION BAR & GRILL

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THE BIG FAT COMEDY HOUR AT LUSH

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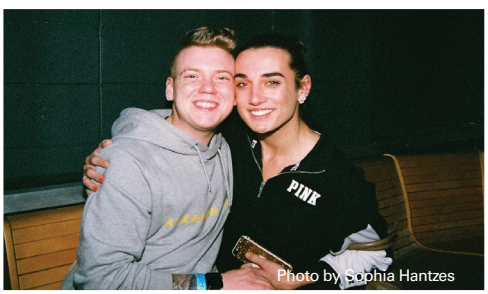
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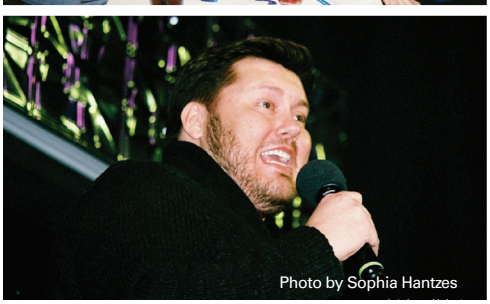
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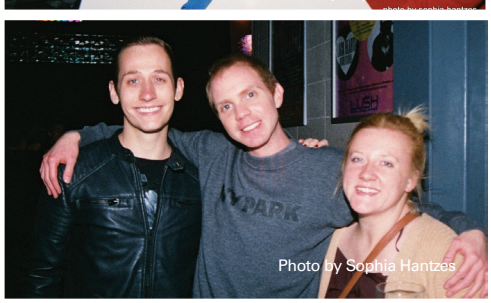
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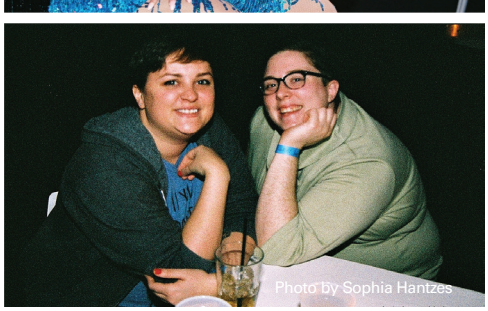
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TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

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Animal Engine takes classic literature and turns it on its head with minimalist staging and expressive physicality. With *Forever Flight*, solo actor Karim Muasher is inspired by Antoine de Saint-Exupery's novella, *The Little Prince*, and Windsor McKay's comic strip, *Nemo in Slumberland*. Ryan Underbakke directs this whimsical tale of a boy and his paper airplane.

Muasher shares, "Entering into the mindset of a child, with their limitless capacity for play and imagination, is a complete joy for me as a performer. There's so much freedom there. When I'm rehearsing, I try to think of myself as a living cartoon, where anything is possible. No idea or impulse is too farfetched. The world of adults is bound by so many rules, but this character is having none of that."

RHINOCEROS

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You've probably heard the term "Theater of the Absurd." This refers to a type of staged drama or comedy that uses incongruous and illogical actions and images to tell an atypical story—in all likelihood, *very* atypical. The narrative might be stream-of-consciousness or a wild idea taken to ridiculous extremes. The genre first struck with full force in the mid-20th century; however, its effects have become so pervasive that we may not recognize them when we see them on screen or stage. When you examine the standard classic and hit plays of that time, you'll tend to find what were regarded as attempts at so-called "well-written" plays. So when you come across an absurdist work, you are struck by the bold contrast.

In 1959, Romanian-born Eugene Ionesco (1909-1994) wrote one of absurdist theater's shining gems, *Rhinoceros*. The protagonist is a regular guy who doesn't rock the boat or stand out in any significant way, until everyone around him starts to change into a rhinoceros except him. Another way of putting it is that everyone loses their grip on reality except him, leaving the audience with the idea that he is the only one who is actually perceiving the downfall and disintegration of his society.

Rhinoceros. Photo by Bob Suh

Rhinoceros is generally held to be a comment on the rise of Nazism which had begun roughly a quarter-century earlier. When societies shift into totalitarianism, they have a way of overwhelming the rational capacities of the individual citizen. Hence, Ionesco was known to have pointed out often that he was all about defying conformity and that the individual artist ought to do so. He preferred the term "Theater of Derision" rather than "of the Absurd." Having lived much of his life between Romania and France, he witnessed some of the 20th century's most consequential upheavals firsthand, and was as harshly critical of communism as he was of fascism.

Nowadays, *Rhinoceros* is entrenched as one of the major plays of the past hundred years. Theatre in the Round Players has continually produced major plays of Western culture for 66 years, spanning all genres. Odds are their interpretation of Ionesco will be in the spirit in which it was written.

Forever Flight. Photo by Galen Higgins

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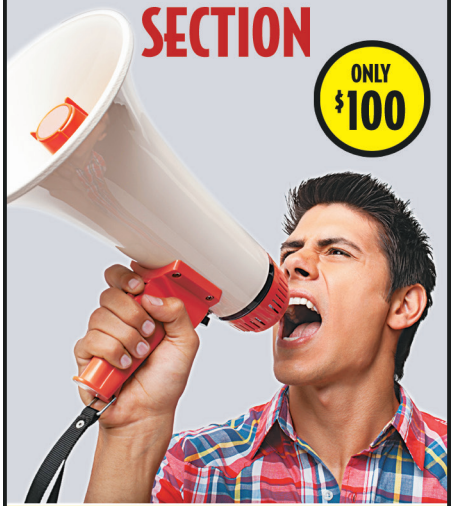

Announcement includes a photo and up to 50 words. Appears in print and our online edition for 2 weeks.

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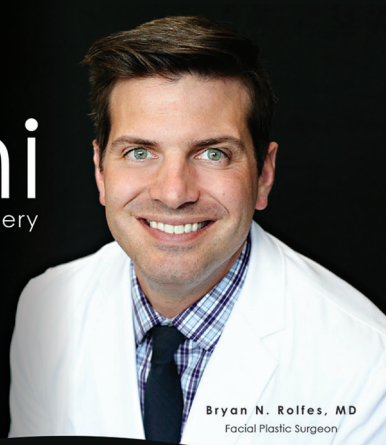

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OUT THERE 2018

Through Jan. 27
Walker Art Center, 1750 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis
With a final performance at The Soap Factory, 514 Second St. SE, Minneapolis
(612) 375-7600
www.walkerart.org

The Walker Art Center's Out There Festival of boundary-crossing performance has turned 30 years old. For three decades, Out There has been the "go-to" alternative performance festival in the Upper Midwest, offering audiences cutting-edge avant-garde work from beyond the Twin Cities and sometimes beyond American borders. This year, diverse pieces from Cuba, Canada, New York, and Great Britain provide a dazzling spectrum that will be well worth attending. Most are performed at the Walker Art Center itself.

The series begins with Havana's Teatro El Publico. Provocative director Carlos Diaz draws from one of world drama's seminal works, *Antigone* by Sophocles. Highly physical actors dressed in absurd costumes deliver an internationally acclaimed and dynamically paced re-imagining of the ancient Greek story titled *Antigonon, un contingente epico* (Jan. 4-6). Archival news footage connects past and present. A great opportunity to get a sense of the social upheaval that has been happening in contemporary Cuba.

Montreal is one of North America's major centers for the arts, so as you might imagine, some stellar work comes out of there. Choreographer/performance artist Dana Michel presents *Mercurial George* (Jan.11-13), in which she wanders through heaps of debris in a search that puts her in touch with notions of personal identity and alternative identities. Moreover, she journeys into alternative realities as well, not to mention new emotional states that surface as she examines what may actually be underneath her own persona. The movement is minimalist and the piece has been described as haunting, comical, and heartbreaking.

The company 600 Highwaymen hails from New York's downtown theater scene. *The Fever* (Jan.18-20) explores themes of individual and collective responsibility. It asks about how willing we are to be available for other people in a time when society seems to be divided into factions and fragments. The audience interacts with the performers (participation optional) as it inquires into how people assemble, organize, and care for those around them.

Our House: The Capitol Play Project. Photo by Leah Cooper

Out There concludes with two pieces by the UK's acclaimed Forced Entertainment experimental theater troupe. *Real Magic* (Jan. 25-26) uses sound-looped applause and concepts inspired by cabaret acts and game shows. Defeat, hope, and anticipation are themes that recur throughout. The British group also performs their darkly comedic Quizoola!, considered by some to be a classic of the avant-garde. This six-hour marathon

plays at the Soap Factory (Jan. 27). The performers ask questions that are personal, philosophical, and trivial. Audience members can come and go as they please. Once again, Out There breaks down barriers we may not have even realized we had and re-imagines ways in which we encounter live performance.

OUR HOUSE: THE CAPITOL PLAY PROJECT

January 19 -28
Minnesota State Capitol, St. Paul
www.capitolplay.brownpapertickets.com

Playwrights and co-directors Alan Berks and Leah Cooper have been researching the actual lives and personalities of those who dedicate themselves to public service in the People's House, the Minnesota State Capitol. It portrays a wild card governor who comes to power, and the chaos that subsequently ensues. The performances will actually be performed at the Capitol building. Presented by Wonderlust Productions.

Berks shares, "Three years ago, we thought it worthwhile to look beneath the partisan headlines at the people who have to make the government work for its citizens every day. We didn't know what we would hear, we didn't have any particular axe to grind. After listening to stories from more than a hundred civil servants, lobbyists, legislators, media, activists, tour guides, and more, we think that an open-hearted knowledge about the efforts people make to create good outcomes for all Minnesotans is even more worthwhile. Over the course of the process, *Our House: The Capitol Play Project* has developed into a play about the invisible parts of the process and the invisible people within that process—both in terms of the behind-the-scenes workers and the people who haven't easily found access to power at the Capitol."

He continues, "When we asked government workers to describe a moment where they really felt like they understand why they worked at the Capitol, where they really felt they belonged and were doing the kind of work that made them feel fulfilled, more than a few of them described the scene at the Capitol when marriage equality passed. The emotion was so palpable that day, the way in which they could see how people's lives were directly affected by the work that they did, it made an impression on people—even those who weren't on the side of the bill. Aspects of this story are repeated in both the first and second act of the play—especially in the second act when our hero asks the chorus to rise above their cynicism." ■

Cardboard Piano
By Hansol Jung; Directed by Signe V. Harriday
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EAT THE MENU | BY BRADLEY TRAYNOR | PHOTOS BY HUBERT BONNET

Southeast Asian restaurant Hai Hai is a new culinary addition to Northeast Minneapolis.

Hai Hai

Hungry for Vietnamese street food? Of course you are. And you're in luck. There's a new express route to Southeast Asia by way of Northeast Minneapolis. And it's well worth the trip.

Meet Hai Hai. This technicolor tour of tropical Asian tastes comes courtesy of the amazing duo behind Hola Arepa, Christina Nguyen and Birk Grudem. Which means you're in good hands. Talented hands who know how to delight diners. Specifically, their taste buds.

Which is exactly what happened one recent winter's night, when I escaped the drab and snow-covered streets of Minneapolis with a few friends to dine and drink our way across Hai Hai's brand new menu: a menu at once comforting and adventurous. You've had spring rolls, sure, but what about chopped clams or crispy turmeric crepes? Doubtful. Now's your chance. Explore.

Explore we did. Those very comforting spring rolls, for example, are stuffed full of fresh herbs, crunchy pickled carrots and jicama, layered with rich pork sausage and crispy egg roll skin.

The lemongrass chopped clams were a surprise table favorite. Briny, citrus-dressed clams chopped with shallots and peanuts perfect for dipping with the accompanying crispy shrimp and sesame rice crackers, crunchy and bursting with flavor.

Speaking of flavor, let's talk about the banana blossom salad. Salads are rarely a standout favorite. Consider this dish the exception to that rule. A lively exception. Banana flower, cabbage, and tart pomelo segments combine with shrimp, pickled onion, radish, peanut, fried shallots and fresh herbs to create magic in your mouth.

Lettuce wraps abound at Hai Hai. Which means, order the Vietnamese crepe. Seriously. If you don't, we can't be friends. This crispy turmeric and coconut milk rice flour crepe is crammed with melt-in-your-mouth pork belly and fresh shrimp, as well as bean sprouts and onion. Just break off a hunk, wrap it in lettuce and crunch away. You'll be the envy of everyone who failed by not ordering one.

Another lettuce wrap favorite was the beef grilled in betel leaf. Little packages of savory, beefy goodness, nestled atop rice noodles and served with a rich pineapple shrimp sauce.

Hai Hai offers a bright, tropical flair to its interior design and ambiance.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

THE PIRATES OF PENZANCE
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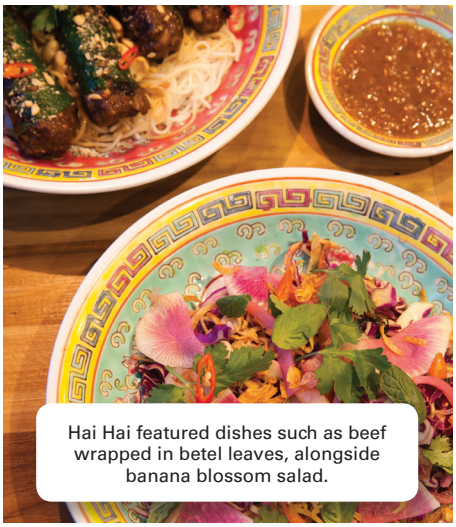
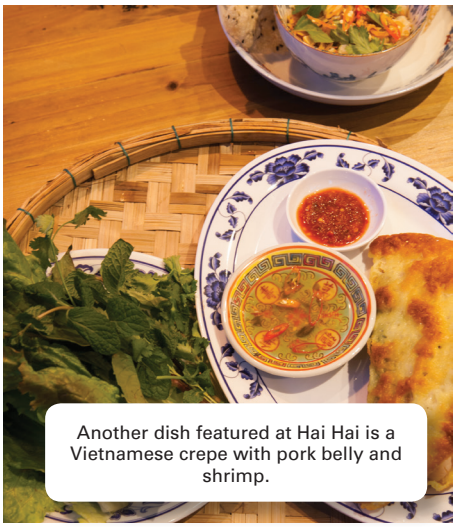


Hai Hai featured dishes such as beef wrapped in betel leaves, alongside banana blossom salad.

Drink options at Hai Hai include—clockwise from left—the Floating Market, the Sun and Done, and the Old Town Saigon.



Another dish featured at Hai Hai is a Vietnamese crepe with pork belly and shrimp.

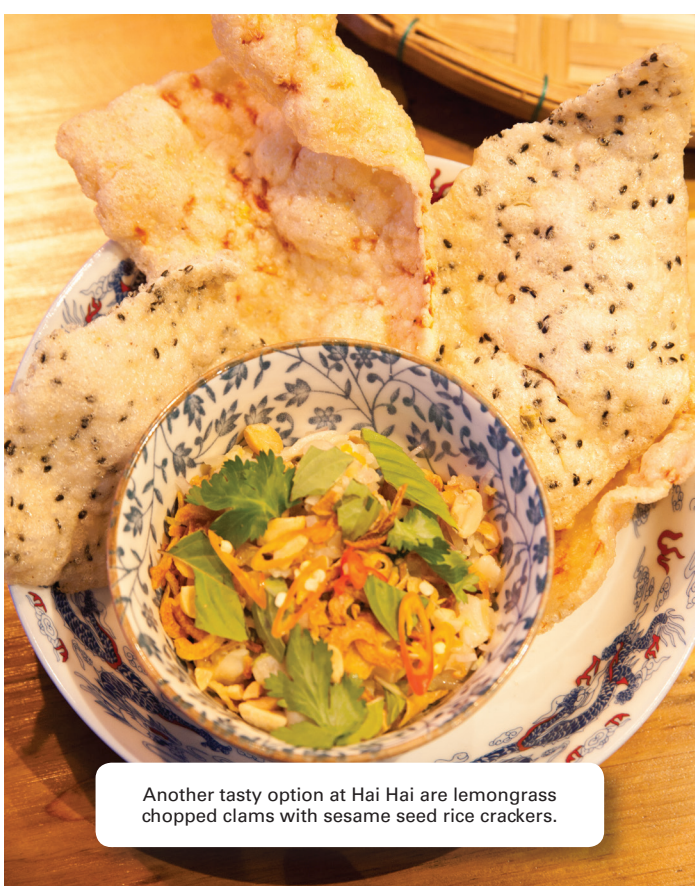
Hungry yet? Of course you are. Thirsty? Even better. As we ate our way across the menu, an array of Hai Hai's signature cocktails was also had by all. Except me, that is, because I don't drink. The good news for you? I took notes.

The cocktail menu is as colorful, creative, and lively as the food. The beachy, tropical tease otherwise known as the Sun and Done mixes a swift kick of toasted coconut rum, lime juice and coconut water. The Old Town Saigon smells positively Manhattan-y with its base of cognac, cinnamon liqueur, and orange bitters. The Floating Market is a floral-forward vodka cocktail, layered with notes of jasmine and lemongrass.

A few cocktails and several plates later, our entire table was pleasantly contented and completely oblivious to the snowy, cold winter night outside. That's no easy feat in Minnesota. Thanks, Hai Hai.

If at any point this winter, the lack of sunlight or sub-zero temperatures starts to get to you, don't fret. Just hop in the car and head over Northeast. There's a little bit of Hanoi waiting for along University Avenue. With a whole lot of flavor. ■

HAI HAI
2121 University Ave. NE, Minneapolis
www.haihaimpls.com



Another tasty option at Hai Hai are lemongrass chopped clams with sesame seed rice crackers.

Birk Grudem and Christina Nguyen of Hai Hai.

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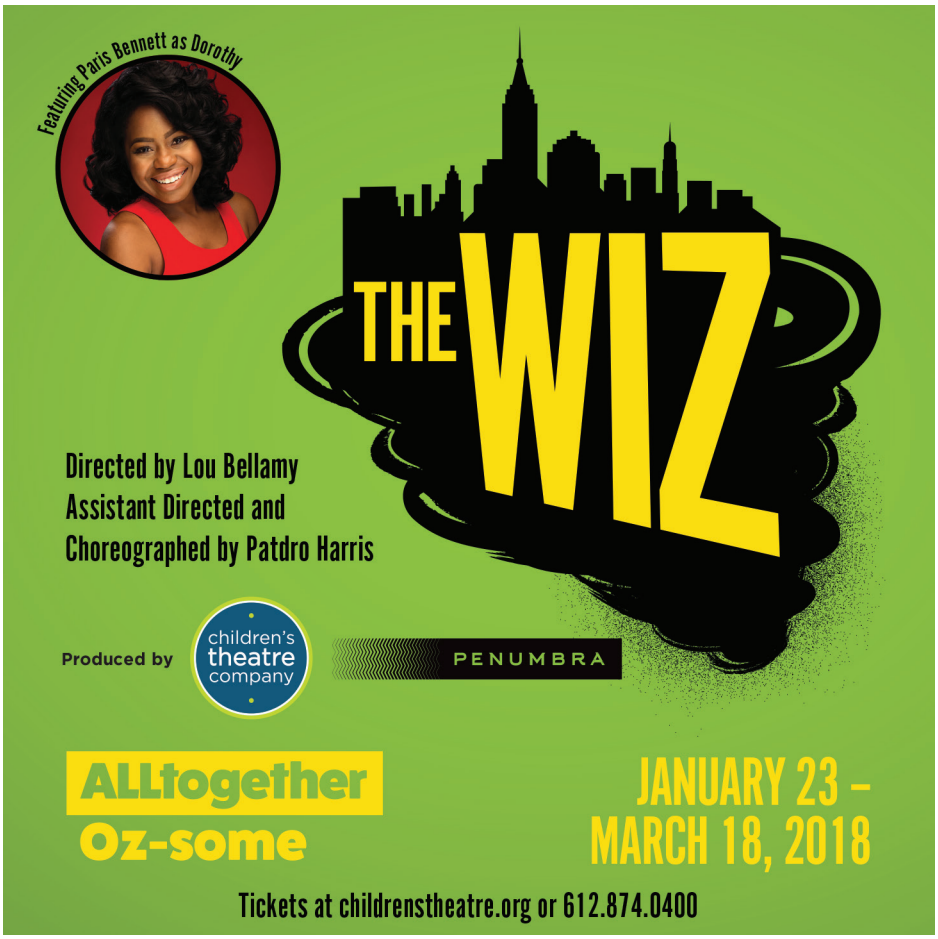

2018 Winter WHAT TO DO

By Kassidy Tarala

WELLS FARGO WINTER SKATE

Landmark Center, St. Paul
Through Feb. 11
$4 skate rental
www.visitsaintpaul.com

Take a tour of downtown St. Paul… on skates! Grab your friends and family and head down to the Landmark Center for Wells Fargo Winter Skate. Not only is it free to skate, but the twinkling lights of Rice Park and elegance of the Landmark Center make for a picturesque setting, too.

BETTY DANGER'S ROOFTOP WINTER WONDERLAND DISPLAY

Betty Danger's Country Club, Minneapolis
Through Feb. 4
$8-11
www.bettydangers.com

Grab some hot chocolate, cider, and a loved one and enjoy a ride through Betty Danger's Rooftop Winter Wonderland Display. A vertically revolving sleigh ride, this winter wonderland is surely unlike any other. For just $8, you can get a hot mug of cider or cocoa—or spike it for just $3.

STILLWATER ICE CASTLES

Lowell Park, Stillwater
Through March
$6-13
www.discoverstillwater.com

This is a winter wonderland you won't want to miss. Explore the icy twists and turns of the Stillwater Ice Castles during the day or at night. With beautiful glacial blues during the day and a unique, icy glow during the night, there's never a bad time to walk around this winter wonderland.

TWIN CITIES WINTER FARMERS MARKET

Minneapolis and St. Paul
Through April 14
www.mplsfarmersmarket.com
www.stpaulfarmersmarket.com

Who says you can't enjoy a farmers market during the winter? Swing by either of these locations for farm-sourced items.

STATE CAPITOL TOURS

St. Paul State Capitol
Suggested $5 donation
www.mnhs.org

Wander the halls of the recently renovated St. Paul State Capitol building on a 45-minute guided tour. Learn about Minnesota state history, the building's architecture, and more. All tours are public and leave at the top of the hour from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26

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Lavender Magazine @lavmag · Jul 10
Our canine companions enjoy eating outdoors too, so why bother leaving them behind? ow.ly/Ps1jo (by @ShLueck)

Lavender Magazine @lavmag · Jul 10
More and more people are traveling with pets, and @commonshotel is ahead of the curve on this one. ow.ly/Ps0Xj (by @ShLueck)

Lavender Magazine @lavmag · Jul 10
It's time to hit the patio! Have you heard of these new outdoor hot spots? ow.ly/Ps0Ge (by @JoyEstelle)

SPORTSOLOGY

Science Museum of Minnesota, St. Paul
$13-19
www.smm.org

From a motion lab to a race against a T-Rex to basketball high jumps, the Science Museum of Minnesota's Sportsology exhibit is perfect for all sports lovers and kids-at-heart. Find your inner Ricky Rubio and learn the science behind the sport.

MINNESOTA REGIONAL POLE COMPETITION

Stepping Stone Theater, St. Paul
Jan. 19-20
$10-60
www.poleandperformingart.com

If you're looking for some talent, strength, and incredible athleticism, the Minnesota Regional Pole Competition is an event you'll want to put on your calendar. With amateur and professional performances, including a youth exhibition, adult exhibition, women's, men's, and doubles, you'll be blown away by the artistic, classic exotic, performance theater, and pole sport performances.

SCIENCE FUSION

Science Museum of Minnesota, St. Paul
Jan. 13, 20, 27 and Feb. 3
Free kids' admission with $19 adult admission
www.smm.org

Show the kiddos in your life the world of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) at the Science Fusion exhibit at the Science Museum of Minnesota. Different events include African-Americans in Science, ¡Amantes de la Ciencia!, American Indians in Science, and Asian-Americans in Science.

TWIN CITIES PRIME TIMERS BOOK CLUB

Quatrefoil Library, Minneapolis
Jan. 20 and Feb. 17
www.qlibrary.org

A subgroup of the Twin Cities Prime Timers Club— which consists of older gay or bisexual men—this book club meets on a monthly basis at the Quatrefoil Library. Join them on the third Saturday of each month from 1:15-3:15 p.m. On Jan. 20, *Beyond Paradise: The Life of Ramon Novarro* by André Soares will be discussed.

RED BULL CRASHED ICE 2018

Cathedral of St. Paul
Jan. 19-20
www.crashedice.redbull.com

After hosting the Red Bull Crashed Ice event for the past six winters, the Cathedral of St. Paul is ready to welcome the high-speed skaters yet again. Come watch as they race their way to the bottom of a long, obstacle-filled track—all on ice skates, of course.

TWINSFEST 2018

Target Field, Minneapolis
Jan. 19-21
$10-20
www.mlb.com/twins/community/twinsfest

Calling all baseball fans! Baseball is no longer just a summer sport. Come to TwinsFest to celebrate the Twins players, Target Field, and the sport of baseball. Throughout the weekend, more than 60 players, current, past and future, will be making appearances.

FUR FLEE
Photo by North Country Bears

LASKIAINEN FINNISH SLIDING FESTIVA
Photo by Iron Range Tourism

PINE CITY WINTER FROLIC

Pine City, MN
Jan. 20
$6-10
www.mnhs.org

Frolic through the snow at the Minnesota Historical Society's Pine City Winter Frolic event. Learn about winter fur trade while enjoying activities like curling stone, Ojibwe snow snake, and snowshoeing.

ART SHANTY PROJECTS

Lake Harriet, Minneapolis
Jan. 20-Feb. 11
www.artshantyprojects.org

The frozen Minnesota lakes aren't just for ice fishing, dontcha know? The Art Shanty Projects are open every weekend regardless of weather to showcase art in a unique public space: on the lake. Learn about art, the environment, and how the two often go hand-in-hand.

ST. PAUL WINTER CARNIVAL

Rice Park, St. Paul
Jan. 25-Feb. 10
www.wintercarnival.com

The St. Paul Winter Carnival has been a Minnesota tradition for over 130 years, which makes it a must on your winter to-do list. From its ice sculptures to the Pioneer Press treasure hunt, the St. Paul Winter Carnival is a family-friendly event to get you out of the house this winter.

U.S. POND HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIP

Lake Nokomis, Minneapolis
Jan. 25-28
www.uspondhockey.com

Whether you come to play, to volunteer, or to watch, the U.S. Pond Hockey Championship will surely keep you entertained despite the chilly weather. Who's gonna win the Golden Shovel this year?

LAKE SUPERIOR ICE FESTIVAL

Barkers Island, Superior, WI
Jan. 26-28
www.lakesuperioricefestival.com

From the Great Lakes Pond Hockey Tournament and the Guns & Hoses pond hockey game, to ice sculptures and ice racing, the Lake Superior Ice Festival has something for everyone. Get your winter sport on with Enbridge/UPI half-pipe snow sliding, or relax by the fire and make some s'mores. The possibilities are endless at the Lake Superior Ice Festival!

VALENTINE'S DAY TC 5K
Photo courtesy of Twin Cities In Motion

Winter WHAT TO DO

RED BULL CRASHED ICE
Photo by Andreas Langreiter

ART SHANTY PROJECTS
Photo by Martin Argyroglo

LAKE HARRIET WINTER KITE FESTIVAL

Lake Harriet, Minneapolis
Jan. 27
www.minneapolisparks.org

Kites in the winter? You read that right! Come join in on the family fun of flying kites of all shapes, sizes, and colors over the frozen sea of Lake Harriet. Other festival activities include ice fishing, horse-drawn wagon rides, snowshoeing, and a marshmallow roast.

WINTER ADVENTURE FAMILY DAY

Forest History Center, Grand Rapids
Jan. 27
$6-10
www.mnhs.org

Indulge in all-things-winter at the Winter Adventure Family Day event at the Forest History Center in Grand Rapids, Minnesota. From snowshoeing and cross-country skiing to bullet sleds and snowball fights, this is the ultimate winter party. Also, enjoy live music, a vintage ski exhibit, carnival games, and wildlife presentations with live animals.

STAR TREK VS. STAR WARS DRAG BRUNCH

Union Rooftop, Minneapolis
Jan. 27
$10
facebook.com/flipphone

Alas, it boils down to one important question: Star Trek or Star Wars? Pick your side at the Star Trek vs. Star Wars Drag Brunch hosted on the Union Rooftop. Dress as your favorite character and get ready to defend your galaxy.

MINNESOTA ROLLERGIRLS
Photo by Ryan Starr

U.S. POND HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIP
Photo by BLK WLF Photography

Winter

WHAT TO DO

SAINT PAUL WINTER CARNIVAL
Photo by BLK WLF Photography

POLAR PLUNGE

Jan. 27-March 17
Minimum $75 donation
www.plungemn.org

Brave Minnesota's chilliest waters at one of its several Polar Plunges. All participants must raise a minimum of $75, all of which goes to Special Olympics Minnesota. Come on in, the water's… er…

LASKIAINEN FINNISH SLIDING FESTIVAL

Loon Lake Community Center, Aurora
Feb. 3-4
$3-5
www.ironrange.org

Get ready to slide like you've never slid before. At the Iron Range's Laskiainen Finnish Sliding Festival in Aurora, MN, you can enjoy live music, food, crowning of the queen, and of course, sliding.

VALENTINE'S DAY TC 5K

Lake Nokomis, Minneapolis
Feb. 10
$20-70
www.tcmevents.org

Nothing says "love" like blood, sweat, and tears. Run toward—or away from—love at the Valentine's Day TC 5K hosted at Lake Nokomis. Join the runners at 10 a.m., sport a back tag that says "single," "taken," or "it's complicated," and mingle away.

VICTORIAN POETRY SLAM

James J. Hill House, St. Paul
Feb. 14
$12
www.mnhs.org

Celebrate Valentine's Day with poetry, Victorian language, and your date for the evening, James J. Hill. Poetry by Poe, Dickinson, and others will be performed, and guests are invited to bring a short piece of their own poetry, too.

WINTERFEST

St. Paul Union Depot
Feb. 16
www.mncraftbrew.org

Every beer and/or food lover's dream has come true! Some of Minnesota's finest breweries and restaurants are coming together to provide high-end beer and food at Winterfest. Enjoy locally brewed craft beer and support some of the best local chefs.

STAR TREK-
STAR WARS
DRAG BRUNCH
Photo by Chad Kampe

2018 WISHES & MORE WINTER BALL

Marriott City Center Downtown Minneapolis
Feb. 24
$50-2,500
www.wishesandmore.org

Everyone dreams of leaving the frostbitten days behind them in exchange for a tropical beach vacation, but that can be nearly impossible in a drawn-out Minnesota winter. Not anymore! Join Wishes & More for a night of giving and sunbathing at the Winter Ball. The theme is Beach Ball: Glam in the Sand, so throw on some flip-flops, grab a towel, and help children fighting terminal illnesses.

IMPERIAL COURT CORONATION 26 NIGHT

Crowne Plaza Minneapolis Northstar Downtown
Feb. 24
$25-100
www.impcourtmn.com

Join Emperor XXV Darin Hatch & Empress XXV Tonia Lee Richards for Coronation 26 Night. Coronation 26 will be hosting a series of events throughout the weekend including an In-Town Show, an Out-of-Town Show, and a victory brunch after the night of the Coronation.

GRUMPY OLD MEN FESTIVAL

Wabasha-Kellogg Chamber, Wabasha, MN
Feb. 24
www.wabashamn.org

If you like being grumpy and eating good food and playing games while doing it, you'll love the Grumpy Old Men Festival in Wabasha. Activities range from a luncheon to bingo, a Grumpy Plunge, and live music and entertainment.

FUR FLEE 11

Barkers Island Inn, Superior, WI
March 1-4
$55-110
www.ncbears.com

Escape the Minnesota winter and travel through space: the sun, moon, and stars, that is. This year's Fur Flee, located in Superior, WI, will have an island beach party, a midnight leather/gear party, and an astrology party.

MN ROLLERGIRLS CHAMPIONSHIP BOUT

Roy Wilkins Auditorium, St. Paul
March 3
$14-18
www.mnrollergirls.com

Come cheer on the MN RollerGirls as they compete in the championship of season 14. The winning team takes home the Golden Skate, and you'll go home with a freebie RollerGirls t-shirt if you're one of the first 200 to show up.

BOCK FEST 2018

Schell's Brewery Grounds, New Ulm
March 3
www.business.newulm.com

Join your thousand closest friends at the 32nd annual Bock Fest at Schell's. Not only will there be live music and a cozy bonfire to protect you from the chilly Minnesota air, but also a Bock Medallion Hunt. Winter has never been so fun.

CABIN FEVER DAYS

Winehaven Winery and Vineyard
Chisago City, MN
March 3-4
www.exploreminnesota.com

Free admission and wine tasting? Sign me up! Come to Winehaven's Winery and Vineyard for their Cabin Fever Days. Taste, purchase, and learn more about their wine, the process of making it, and the aging process in the cellar.

HOT DASH 5K

Minneapolis
March 24
$25-60
www.tcmevents.org

Running is the perfect way to warm up during the winter months, especially when it includes cool gear, a finish festival, local food, and a celebration of Minnesota.

MN AIDS WALK

Boom Island Park, Minneapoils
Feb. 10
www.mnaidsproject.org

Cool Walk, Warm Hearts is the theme of this year's MN AIDS Walk starting in Boom Island Park. The walk will take place from 3-7 p.m., and it includes activities for kids and adults, as well as places to warm up. If you can't walk, consider donating and help MN AIDS Project reach their goal of $200,000.

OPPORTUNITY CONFERENCE: ADVANCING LGBTQ HEALTH

Earle Brown Heritage Center
Brooklyn Center, MN
March 26-27
$150-300
www.opportunityconference.org

The second annual Opportunity Conference, hosted by the Rainbow Health Initiative, is coming to Minneapolis to discuss disparities experienced by the GLBT community. Health providers, practitioners, researchers, and policy makers will be coming together to have these important discussions. ■

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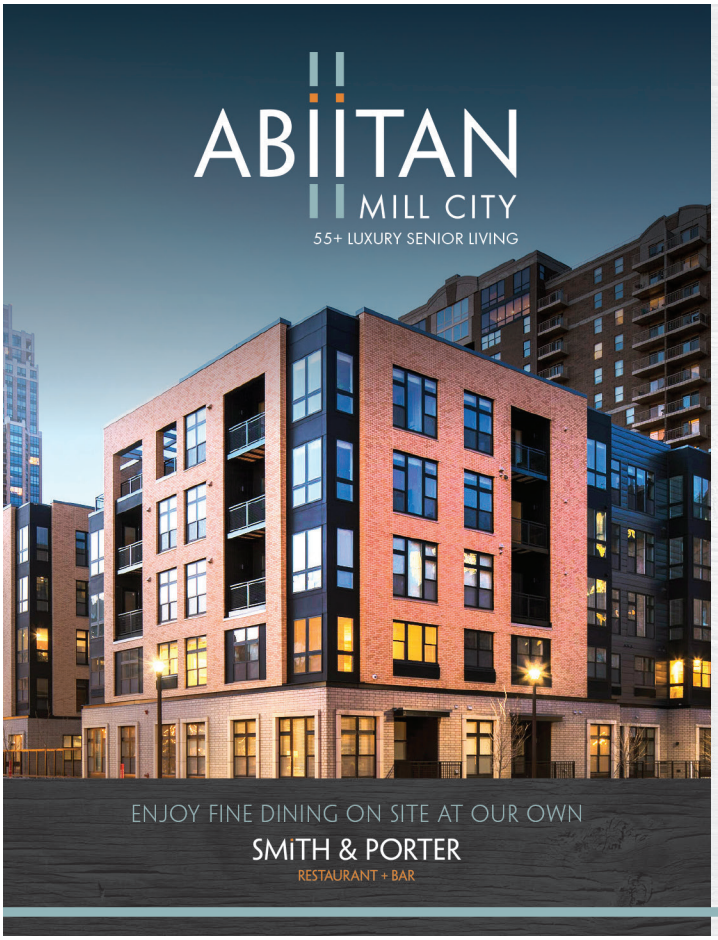

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HEALTH & WELLNESS | BY KASSIDY TARALA

Fitness Without Freezing

Staying active and fit in the winter can be difficult when the weather is dreary and gray. For seniors, fitness is even more crucial, but also even more difficult to maintain during this chilly time of year. As GLBT seniors in particular can experience isolation during these winter moths. However, with the help and tips of various senior health services, seniors don't have to go about it alone.

Horizon Health Services, based out of Pierz, Minnesota, encourages seniors to maintain their mental and physical fitness all year long, especially during the winter months. Because the days are shorter and people don't get to spend as much time outside as they would like, Horizon Health Services believes that winter typically has a pretty negative impact on the lives of Minnesotan seniors. To avoid the boredom of mundane winter days, Horizon Health Services suggests that seniors exercise their brains and their bodies with indoor activities including reading, crossword puzzles, exercise, listening to music, and playing cards or other board games.

Reading doesn't just help pass the time, but it also exercises the mind. While reading newspapers and magazines is still important, it's essential that seniors read longer books to pass more time and give them more to think about. Also, a trip to the library can give seniors the opportunity to both pick out some good reads and get out and about during the winter months.

Working on crossword puzzles is a great workout for the brain by keeping it fresh and active. Not only is it a good activity for seniors to do on their own, but it can also bring people together. Working on crossword puzzles with friends, family, or significant others can help strengthen interpersonal relationships while still giving the mind a good workout.

It may be obvious, but that's for a good reason. Exercise can give seniors an easy way to stay physically fit and active, perhaps without even leaving the house. Walking on a treadmill for only 20-30 minutes each day is easy, but still effective for seniors to stay healthy during the winter. If they're looking for a chance to get out of the house, walking around the neighborhood for the same amount of time is a great way to get exercise and fresh air.

Playing music is not only fun, but it's also an easy way to keep the mind active. Listening to their favorites can give seniors a more positive outlook on life, even during the dreariest time of the year. Also, repeatedly listening to the same records can help give their memories exercise, too, something we could all use a little more of during this time of year.

Lastly, playing cards or other games can help seniors stay active during the winter months by giving them an opportunity to socialize and exercise their minds. Trying new games, playing the classics, and everything in between is a great way for seniors to stay mentally active during these cold months.

Similar to Horizon Health Services, Twin Cities-based Above & Beyond Senior Services offers seniors guidance and support with their physical and mental health. Above & Beyond President Allison Bakke believes that maintaining fitness doesn't need to be an impossible task for seniors during the winter months.

"Remember to drink water throughout your day, staying hydrated is critical to good health. Also, keeping up with an exercise routine that includes both strengthening and cardiovascular components is extremely helpful. At a minimum, shoot for two days per week of activity, more is better," she says.

Bakke also suggests that maintaining mental health is just as important as physical health. She suggests staying engaged with family and friends, avoiding isolation, using public transportation to avoid going out alone, and creating a proactive plan with caregivers to prepare for the effects of the season on their mood.

Walking with a friend or family member and getting as much fresh air as possible can be beneficial with dealing with seasonal sadness, according to Bakke.

"We frequently see many seniors who feel depressed or blue during the winter and holiday months. There are many reasons for this: less sunlight in our days, holiday related stress, loss of friends or partners through death, changing routines and abilities as aging occurs, feelings of lost independence. These are all challenging realities of the aging process. The number one thing to do is talk to a trusted support person, get help to process your feelings," she says.

Bakke suggests *Dancing With Elephants: Mindfulness Training for Those Living with Dementia, Chronic Illness, or an Aging Brain* by Jarem Sawatsky for seniors to read during the winter months. ■

For more information on how seniors can stay active during the winter, visit Above and Beyond Senior Services at www.aboveservices.com, and Horizon Health Services at www.horizonhealthservices.org.

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Winter WHAT TO DO

By Kassidy Tanala

RESTLESS ON THE RANGE

As the dark, snowy days of winter are looming over us, it can be easy, habitual even, to find solace under the bright city lights and bustling nightlife that revive the chilly Minnesota tundra. However, the city isn't necessarily the most exciting place to spend the everlasting days of winter.

The Iron Range allows visitors to take full advantage of the snowy winter weather with endless outdoor activities in a way that the city just isn't able to. According to Iron Range Tourism Bureau Director Beth Pierce, "There's no shortage of outdoor activities, from Nordic and alpine skiing and snowboarding to winter hiking, fat tire cycling and even curling, birding or ice skating. Don't forget motorized adventure, either! Snowmobiling is big up here, with access to more than 2,000 miles of trails right from every lodging property in the area."

With all of these winter activities and sports, there's nearly no reason not to take a winter trip to the Iron Range. Yet, there's a number of other reasons why people find themselves escaping the busy city streets for a winter vacation on the Iron Range. "You will find less traffic, easier access to trails, and more tranquility than a trip to, say, the North Shore. If you stay at some place like Green Gate Guest Houses, you will find unique and handcrafted spaces (a log cabin, farmhouse or barn) close to Giants Ridge ski resort and Nordic or hiking trails, but super serene and beautiful. Have a fire under the stars and sip hot-mulled wine just a few feet from your one-of-a-kind guest house," says Pierce. "At Northern Comfort B&B, you're not far from trails, and there's an authentic Finnish sauna right onsite. This property is a Finnish farmhouse whose barn now houses antiques and recycled pieces."

Pierce says that there are also several indoor activities that allow visitors to escape the cold weather. From the Minnesota Discovery Center or the Heritage Museum, to the Hibbing Historical Society Museum or the Bob Dylan tours, the Iron Range has fun activities for all visitors, whether they're looking to get out and play in the snow or stay inside and learn about the history of the area.

"The Sax-Zim Bog borders Minnesota's Mesabi Iron Range and is a popular migratory route and winter hunting grounds for northern hawk owls, great gray owls, black-backed woodpeckers, boreal chickadees, pine grosbeak, and many other birds and mammals. The land is laced with many dirt and paved roads, allowing you to look for birds right from the road. A winter Welcome Center is the site of meet-ups hosted by Bog Naturalist Clinton Niehaus, including snowshoe hikes, winter tree ID, campfire talks, and more," Pierce says.

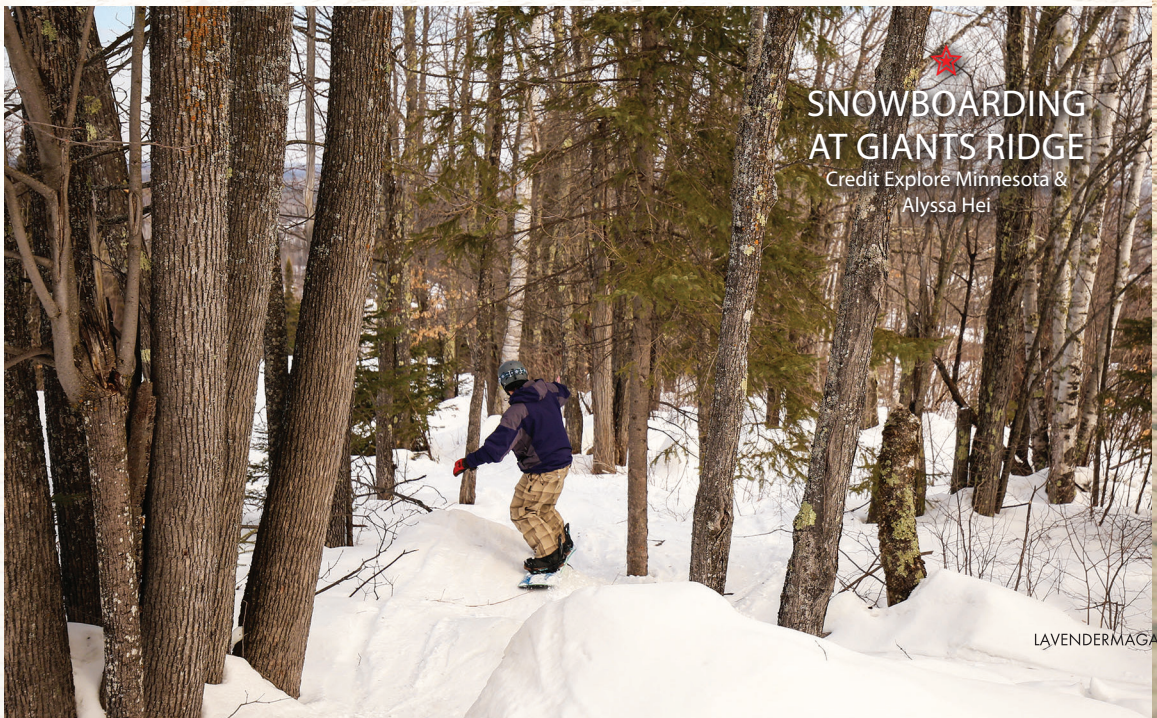
SNOWMOBILING THE TACONITE TRAIL

Photo courtesy of Iron Range Tourism Bureau

FATBIKING AT GIANTS RIDGE
Photo by Paul Pluskwik

Another bonus of traveling to the Iron Range during the wintertime is that it's a slower time of year, so tourist sites are less busy and likely have good deals for visitors. "Summer and fall are the most popular times of the year. The 100-plus-mile paved Mesabi Trail winds through the Mesabi Iron Range communities and offers a shuttle service so you can explore sections of the trail and always have a ride back to your home base. Also popular during these times are general sight-seeing and fall color tours, golf, swimming/camping, and hiking," Pierce says. "The most overlooked time of year is late-May to mid-June. Warm enough to want to be outside, but not so hot you will melt on the trails. There are many lodging specials to be had this time of year, and plenty to see and do."

Northern Comfort B&B is a local establishment that is owned and operated by a couple, Kathy Johnson and Pam Zahn. Offering home-cooked country breakfasts, 17 peaceful acres with nothing but the sound of the soft breeze rustling the numerous pine trees, a wood burning sauna, relaxation spaces, comfortable beds, an antique store in the barn, and a great location near the Boundary Waters and Giants Ridge Ski and Golf Resort, Northern Comfort B&B is exactly what we're all dreaming of on a cold winter day in the city.



SNOWBOARDING AT GIANTS RIDGE
Credit Explore Minnesota & Alyssa Hei

According to Zahn, several GLBT visitors come stay at Northern Comfort B&B, especially during popular events including the Northern Lights Music Festival in Aurora, Blueberry Festival in Ely in June or July, and Harvest Moon in September. "We offer a warm and welcoming space that is open to all," says Zahn.

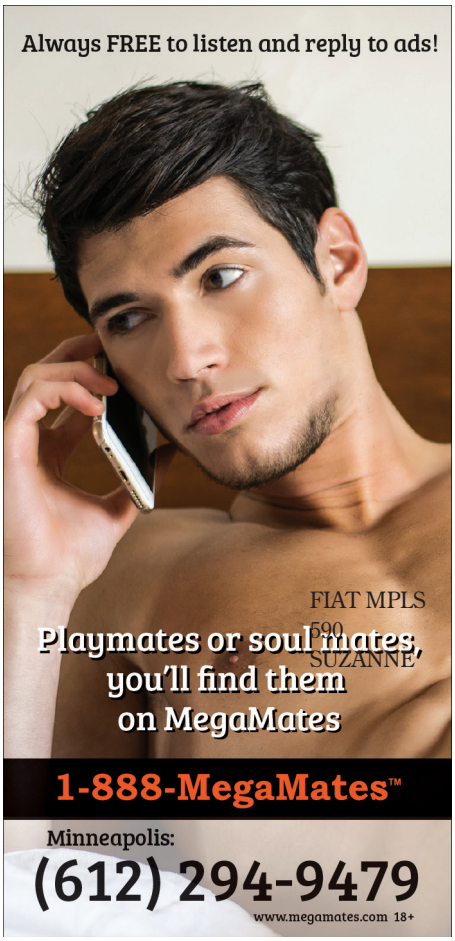
With all of the places to visit and all of the sights to see, Northern Comfort B&B is a great choice for a comfortable, home-away-from-home style vacation that offers a great escape from the busy city streets. Also, as a bed and breakfast, Northern Comfort B&B offers the opportunity to mingle with other guests and find new people to explore the area with, something that is typically missing from our busy city-living lifestyles.

Don't be afraid to leave the city lights and lively nightlife behind for a winter vacation to the Iron Range. From snowmobiling, Nordic skiing, and winter fat tire biking to birding, curling, and snowshoeing, there is an abundance of activities that will give you the chance to get outside and have some fun, despite the frigid temperatures.

Check out Pierce's suggested places to shop, dine, and be entertained:

Burnt Onion Restaurant, Giants Ridge
Vi's Pizza, Biwabik
The Whistling Bird, Gilbert
BoomTown Woodfire Grill, Eveleth
BoomTown Brewery, Hibbing
The Shop Coffeehouse with pastries, live music, woodfire pizza, Virginia
Valentini's old-fashioned Italian supper club, Chisholm
CaneLakes Candy, Virginia
Natural Harvest Food Co-op, Virginia
Pine Grove Gallery, Biwabik
Irma's Finland House, Virginia
Silver Birch gift store, Hibbing
Smith's Infusion, Virginia
Knitting Knight yarn shop, Hibbing
Material Girl fabric store, Virginia ■

SKIING AT GIANTS RIDGE
Photo courtesy of Explore Minnesota & Alyssa Hei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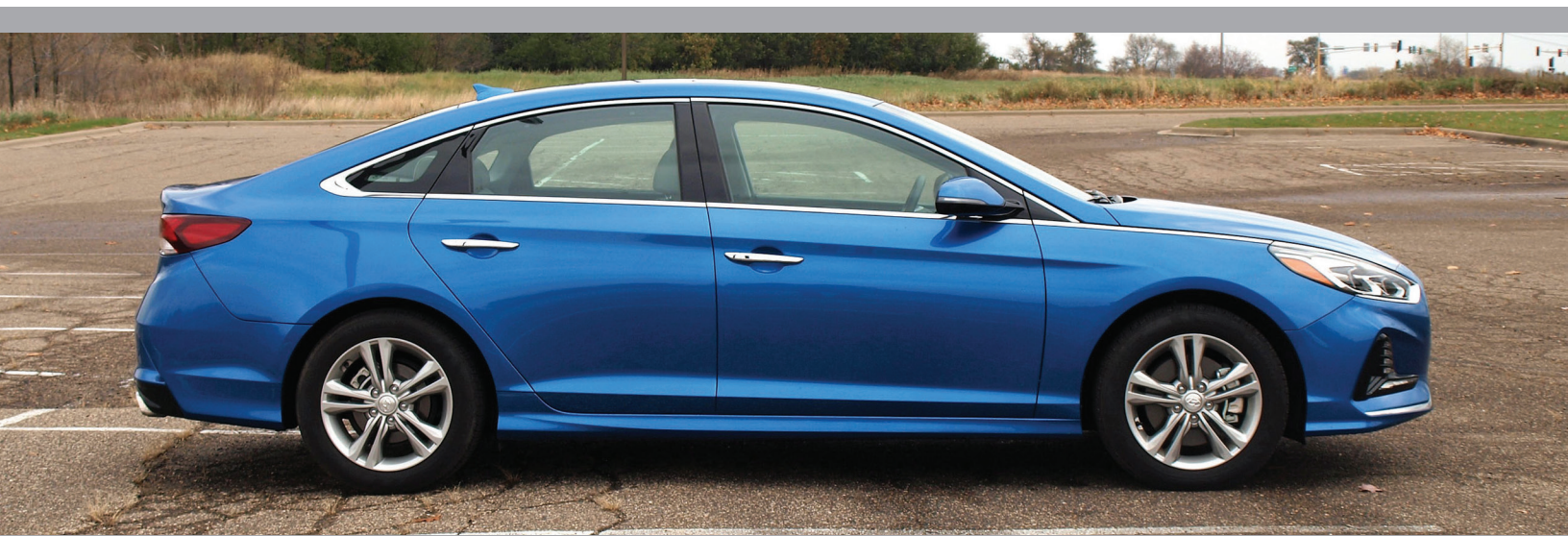
RIDE REVIEW | BY RANDY STERN | PHOTOS BY RANDY STERN

2018 Hyundai Sonata



You probably heard that the "sedan is dead." We can assure that it is not.

While SUVs and crossovers currently rule the automotive universe, the sedan remains a stalwart for those who believe in them. We understand that consumers prefer to step up and into a vehicle rather than step down behind the wheel. Yet, there are those among us who still believe that sedans are indeed the way to go.

In fact, there is a renaissance of sorts of the most popular vehicles sold in the U.S.: the Toyota Camry and Honda Accord. For 2018, both sedans went through a series of design metamorphoses with edgier lines, improved interiors, new engineering underneath the skin, and an increase in technology all around. The automotive media already heaped praise on the new Camry and Accord because of these advances.

It is not just the Camry and Accord that took some major steps forward in the mid-sized family sedan class. Nor are they the only choices in this fiercely competitive segment.

Actually, one such choice has undergone some changes, visibly and underneath. It is also very competitive with the Toyota and Honda… and everyone else in the segment.

That car would be the Hyundai Sonata.

We first saw this current generation of the Hyundai Sonata back in 2014, when we were invited to do a media drive from Chicago to Ann Arbor. We liked where Hyundai was going with the Sonata and said that it "was worth checking out." We also promised to review the model at a later date.

This is that later date. A few years removed from our preview drive, but worth the wait. Like we said, the Hyundai Sonata has undergone some changes since 2018. Let us explain further.

In its debut for 2015, Hyundai raised the bar in terms of vehicle design and cabin space. Yet, it received its share of criticism for being way too toned down from the previous generation model. This update for 2018 included an extensive makeover on the outside. Hyundai re-

engineered the entire front clip all the way to the A-pillar. The new signature cascade grille sets off a set of slimmer LED headlamps and an entirely new hood and front fenders.

Out back is a cleaner look, with the license plate moved to the bumper, enabling the cleanest rear end on any Hyundai in a long while. There is also a trick for opening the trunk—on the logo, there is a button. Find it and open it up!

Overall, the 2018 Sonata is a very handsome sedan that befits its newest purpose for Hyundai. Since the large Azera sedan is no longer offered in this country, the Sonata is the biggest sedan you can buy at your local dealer, aside from the Genesis lineup.

Inside, the instrument panel and center stack also received some touching up. The instrument binnacle got some finishing touches around the gauges, making it pop some more than before. The center stack received a new surround for the touchscreen. The console offers more storage and places for a lot of things you had to fight to put in previous models, let alone its competitors. The placement and access to the touchscreen for the infotainment system is spot on. Every control, switch, and knob worked very well, save for a few, with excellent placement all around.

The Sonata has a huge space that fits five adults, period. Rear seat room is exceptional, almost like an extended-wheelbase large executive car. There is both leg and headroom. Front seat space is excellent, with an abundance of positions to get comfortable in behind the wheel. The seats on the Limited tester we drove were fine, offering some bolstering and plenty of comfort from its perforated leather upholstery. Once you open up the trunk, there are 16.3 cubic feet of usable cargo space. That is pretty big for its class.

Infinity offered ten speakers of sweet sound throughout the Sonata Limited's cabin. Apple CarPlay and Android Auto also offer additional ways to play music and use apps through the touchscreen system. For a suite of connected services, there's BlueLink. BlueLink covers you from accident reporting to sending directions to your navigation system.

The standard 2.4-liter engine and six-speed automatic transmission are pretty responsive as the right combination for the Sonata. With 185 horsepower, there is solid power for efficient commutes. By efficient, we showed a fuel consumption average of 29.7 MPG in our care. The Sonata also comes in an Eco model with a smaller 178-horsepower 1.6-liter turbocharged engine and a couple of Turbo models with a 245-horsepower 2.0-liter turbocharged engine.

The ride quality is best described as "lovely." It is very smooth, as the suspension does a great job absorbing the bumps and anything else that may make driving a challenge. It handles weather much better than before, though the Kumho Solus tires might not be the best choice for certain winter situations. Handling is very controlled, though one would expect a flatter cornering experience. There is nominal roll and lean through the corners, but not enough to scare families inside.

The Sonata's steering is OK, even though there is plenty of road feel from this system. Turning is on the large side, but manageable in tight situations. On-center feel is pretty light, however. Braking is good, with solid pedal feel and response. Normal and panic stops were also good. This Sport had a rearview camera, blind spot monitoring, and rear cross-traffic alert for active safety features.

Pricing for the 2018 Sonata will start from $22,050 for an SE with the 2.4-liter engine. Our Limited tester equipped with the Ultimate Package came to $31,310.

The Hyundai Sonata is still a great choice for family mid-sized sedans. The new face will attract new buyers, but the overall competency of this car will be the deciding factor toward ownership or a lease. In fact, it offers plenty more than its competition: BlueLink and smartphone integration, for starters. Not to mention a straightforward drive that will satisfy everyone.

The question remains whether the Sonata should be considered alongside the newest Toyota Camry and Honda Accord. Including these three in the same conversation points to one fact: the sedan is definitely not dead. Long live the sedan! ■

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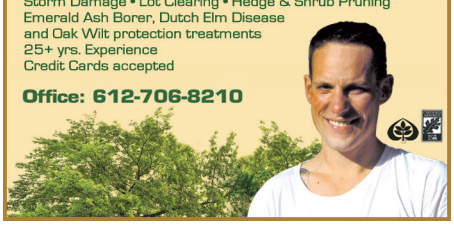

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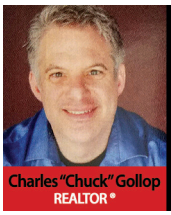

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JEAN M. GUSTAFSON - Estate Law: Probate & Trust, Guardianship & Conservatorship, Child Protection, Mental Health Law. Licensed: Minnesota, South Dakota, Utah. MN Lavender Bar Association Greater Minnesota Fellowship Recipient, 2017. (218) 454-2039, GusLaw.net

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